

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 5, 8-13 and 15-25 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 5 is amended. Support for the claims can be found throughout the specification, including the original claims and the drawings. Withdrawal of the rejections in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. Informalities

The Office Action objects to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5), indicating that element number 62 referenced in the specification is not shown in the drawings. However, it is noted that element number 62 is shown in Figure 3. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the drawings meet the requirements of 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5), and thus the objection should be withdrawn.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 5, 13 and 15-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 3,253,874 to Czech (hereinafter "Czech") in view of Figures 1-2 of the present application. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 5 is directed to a washing machine that includes a cabinet, a tub provided in the cabinet, and a drum rotatably installed in the tub. A control panel coupled to the cabinet forms a receiving space with a top plate of the cabinet, and a filter case configured to receive a noise filter is installed in the receiving space by a filter case coupling assembly configured to slidably couple the filter case to the receiving space provided on the top panel of

the cabinet. As acknowledged in the Office Action, Czech neither discloses nor suggests the features of independent claim1, or the claimed combination of features. Further, Figures 1-2 of the present application fail to overcome the deficiencies of Czech.

Czech discloses a control panel 10 installed at a rear end of a top panel 14 of a washing machine. The control panel 10 is supported by a housing 20 including top wall 21 and end walls 22. Flanges 24 and 25 allow the control panel 10 to be fastened to a front of the housing 20, and flanges 26 and 28 allow a rear panel 33 to be fastened to the back of the housing 20. Flanges 27 allow the end walls 22 of the housing 20 to be fastened to the top panel 14, thereby forming a space defined by the housing 20, the top panel 14 and the rear panel 33. As acknowledged in the Office Action, Czech neither discloses nor suggests the claimed filter case or noise filter, nor a slideable mounting of such a filter case to the receiving space defined in part by the top panel 14.

Figures 1-2 of the present application disclose a washing machine including a control panel 7 positioned at a forward face of a cabinet body 2, between a top edge of a cabinet body 2 and a lower surface of a top plate 5. A guide protrusion 22a extending from a filter case 22 is aligned with a guide slot 2h formed in an installation panel 2a extending from an upper edge of the cabinet body 2, and the filter case 22 is then coupled to the cabinet body 2 by fasteners. Thus, the weight of the filter case 22 and its components is borne by the guide protrusion 22a positioned in the guide slot 2h until a fastener can be applied. The filter case 22, which houses a noise filter 20, is coupled to the installation panel 2a, the installation panel 2a being coupled

between the cabinet body 2 and the top panel 5. Even if the filter case 22 and noise filter 20 disclosed in Figures 1-2 of the present application were combined with the receiving space disclosed by Czech, Figures 1-2 of the present application still neither disclose nor suggest a filter case coupling assembly that could slidably couple the filter case 22 of Figures 1-2 of the present application to a receiving space provided on the top panel 14 of the cabinet disclosed by Czech. Rather, based on the positions of the top wall 21, end walls 22, rear panel 33, top panel 14 and various flanges 24-28, it is clear that the receiving space structure defined by Czech could not accommodate such a slideable coupling.

The Office Action asserts that the claimed slideable coupling of a filter case to a top panel of a cabinet of a washing machine would be an obvious design choice given the disclosure of Figures 1-2 of the present application. Applicants respectfully disagree. The washing machine disclosed in Figures 1-2 of the present application includes structure, i.e., the installation panel 2a, that is specifically designed to receive and couple the filter case 22 to the cabinet body 2 in a particular location, based, presumably, on an external shape of the washing machine and the placement of various other components. Thus, the installation of the filter case 22 on the installation panel 2a allows the various components and associated wires to be connected to the filter case 22 as necessary. Movement of the installation of the filter case 22 from the installation panel 2a to a top surface of the top plate 5, as suggested in the Office Action, would require that other associated components and connections thereto, via wire or other mode, would have to be completely redesigned. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the

slideable coupling of a filter case to a top panel of a washing machine, as recited in independent claim 5, is not an obvious design choice, and would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, even in light of the disclosure provided by Czech and Figures 1-2 of the present application.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 5 is allowable over the applied combination, and thus the rejection of independent claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Czech and Figures 1-2 of the present application should be withdrawn. Dependent claims 13, 15 and 16 are allowable at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claim 5, from which they depend, as well as for their added features.

The Office Action rejects claims 8-12 and 18-24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Czech and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,019,298 to Johnson, IV (hereinafter "Johnson") in view of Figures 1-2 of the present application. For the reasons discussed below, it is respectfully submitted that the combination of Johnson with Czech and/or the disclosure of Figures 1 & 2 of the present application is improper. Accordingly, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 8-12 and 18 depend from claim 5, which is discussed above.

Independent claim 19 is directed to a washing machine including a drum rotatably coupled to a tub provided in a cabinet, and a control panel coupled to the cabinet so as to form a receiving space. Claim 19 also recites a filter case configured to be installed in the receiving space. The filter case includes at least one coupling protrusion extending outward from and laterally along an outer surface thereof. A coupling assembly comprising at least one guide rail is

provided on a surface of the cabinet. The coupling assembly slidably receives the at least one coupling protrusion to mount the filter case in the receiving space.

As acknowledged in the Office Action and as set forth above, Czech and Figures 1-2 of the present application, either alone or in combination, neither disclose nor suggest such features, or the claimed combination of features. Specifically, Czech and Figures 1-2 of the present application fail to disclose or suggest a mounting system in which one or more coupling protrusions are received in one or more corresponding guide rails.

Johnson discloses a beam suspension system for use in rapidly built kit homes. In the Johnson system, a dovetail shaped mortise is formed within a joist. A beam has a tenon having a dual tapered dovetail shaped end. The tenon of the beam is inserted into the mortise of the joist to rapidly join the beam to the joist. The entirety of Johnson's disclosure is directed specifically to the use of a mortise and tenon joint in the building construction industry.

Johnson's system is clearly not within the same field of endeavor as the claimed washing machine. One of ordinary skill in the washing machine art, looking for a new way to mount a filter case to a washing machine cabinet, would not have been motivated to search in the building construction art for mounting systems. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Johnson is non-analogous art, and therefore is not properly combinable with Czech and/or Figures 1-2 of the present application. For at least this reason, it is respectfully submitted that the combination is improper and that the rejection should be withdrawn.

Moreover, even if one were to combine Johnson with Czech and/or Figures 1-2 of the

present application, it is respectfully submitted that one would still not arrive at a washing machine as claimed. At best, Johnson only teaches ways to mount a beam to a joist. The Johnson mounting system relies upon a vertical orientation of the slots, gravity, and a tapering of mortise to effectively lock a beam to a joist. There is no evidence that one of skill in the washing machine art would find a way to modify this mounting system so that it could be used to mount a filter case on a horizontal top plate of a washing machine. For this additional reason, it is respectfully submitted that the combination is improper and that the rejection should be withdrawn.

For all the above reasons, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 8-12 and 18-24 is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 17 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Czech, in view of Figures 1-2 of the present application, and further in view of Korean Publication No. KR2003-0071985 to Kwon et al. (hereinafter "Kwon"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Dependent claims 17 and 25 are allowable over Czech and Figures 1-2 of the present application at least for the reasons set forth above with respect to independent claims 1 and 19, from which they respectively depend, as well as for their added features. Kwon fails to overcome the deficiencies of Czech and Figures 1-2 of the present application.

Under 35 U.S.C. §103(c), subject matter developed by another person which qualifies as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) shall not preclude patentability under 35 U.S.C. §103 where the subject matter in the claimed invention was, at the time the invention was made, subject to an

obligation of assignment to the same entity. In accordance with the assignment document (copy provided herewith, for the Examiner's convenience), the Assignee for the present application is LG Electronics Inc. of Seoul, Korea. The Assignee of record for Kwon is also LG Electronics Inc. of Seoul, Korea. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Kwon is not a proper reference, and cannot be properly applied with Czech in a rejection of the present application.

However, even if improperly combined with Czech and Figures 1-2 of the present application in a rejection of the present application, Kwon is merely cited as allegedly teaching the use of a coupling boss, and thus fails to overcome the deficiencies of Czech and Figures 1-2 of the present application as discussed above.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper, and that claims 17 and 25 are allowable over even the improper combination. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 17 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Czech, Figures 1-2 of the present application and Kwon is respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that any additional changes would place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned, Joanna K. Mason, at the telephone number listed below.

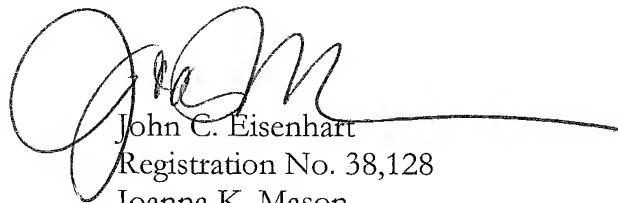
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Reply to Office Action of **July 11, 2007**

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this, concurrent and future replies, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 16-0607 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
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